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NATURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTE ENDORSES BAY-DELTA STANDARDS AGREEMENT

The Natural Heritage Institute today gave its endorsement to a historic consensus agreement on environmental protections for the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary.

The three-year agreement commits the state and federal governments to implement a broad set of measures to protect the Bay-Delta environment, including requirements for water flows through the Delta, limits on water diversions, and limits on the number of winter run salmon and Delta smelt -- both endangered species -- that may be killed by the state and federal projects. In addition, a fund of approximately \$60 million per year will be created to bolster habitat conditions and to purchase supplemental water.

According to David Fullerton, a spokesman for the Natural Heritage Institute, "this agreement is basically a three-year trial marriage between the state and federal governments and between the environmental and water using communities. If we can make cooperation work, California's environment and economy will both benefit and we can begin to put the California water wars behind us. If we fail, it is back to the trenches with risks to all sides."

If the agreement holds together, the parties will begin to look at longer-range improvements in California's water system in 1995, including both the physical plumbing of the system and the rules by which water is stored and moved.